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FAMILY OF FOSTER, OF CHARLESTOWN, MASS.

COMMUNICATED BY EDWARD J. FORSTER, M.D. AND W.S. APPLETON, A.M.]

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FOSTERS OF CHARLESTOWN, MASS.

WILLIAM FOSTER, the founder of this family, was admitted to the Church of Charlestown, 15 (6) 1652. Savage thinks he was of Boston, 1644, with wife Susanna, but proof of this is wanting. His English origin is also unknown, but he may have been the passenger of his name in the Hercules from Southampton, in 1634, and he may have been son of Richard Foster, of Romsey in Hampshire, baptized there 22 January, 1615. William Foster, of Charlestown, was aged *about* 80 at his death, while this identification would make him 83, which is hardly inconsistent, and it may be noticed that his grandson Richard is called 82 on his tombstone, when he was really but little over 80. This, however, is mere conjecture. We know that William Foster had for wife Anne, daughter of William Brackenbury, of Charlestown and Malden, and that she was admitted to the Church, 23 (7) 1652. He was a sea captain, and in 1669 master of the Dolphin. Mather in his *Magnalia*, III. 183, has this mention of him. It is found in the Life of the Rev. John Eliot.

"There was a Godly Gentleman of *Charlstown*, one Mr. *Foster*, who with his Son, was taken captive by *Turkish* Enemies. Much Prayer was employed, both privately and publickly, by the good People here, for the Redemption of that Gentleman; but we were at last informed, that the Bloody Prince, in whose Dominions he was now a Slave, was resolved that in his Life-time no Prisoner should be released; and so the Distressed Friends of this Prisoner now concluded, *Our Hope is lost!* Well, upon this, Mr. *Eliot*, in some of his next Prayers, before a very solemn Congregation, very broadly beg'd, *Heavenly Father, work for the Redemption of thy poor Servant Foster; and if the Prince which detains him will not, as they say, dismiss him as long himself lives, Lord, we pray thee to kill that cruel Prince; kill him, and glorify thy self upon him.* And now behold the answer: The poor Captiv'd Gentleman quickly returns to us that had been mourning for him as a lost Man, and brings us News, that the Prince which had hitherto held him, was come to an *Untimely Death*, by which means he was now set at Liberty."

The date of this captivity is fixed by John Hull, who wrote in his diary 1671, "8ber 21. We received intelligence that William Foster, master of a small-ship, was taken by the Turks as he was going to Bilboa with fish. (He was redeemed, and came home 9ber, 1673.)" His good social position is shown by the fact that his Isaac stood first in rank in a class of eleven at Harvard College. He died at Charlestown, 8 May, 1698, and his widow, 22 Sept., 1714, in her 86th year.—In his will he mentioned his "kinswoman

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Elenor Davis in England, and her Daughter, Mary Davis." The town records thus mention his death. "William Foster Navegat^r. aged about 80 years dyed May 8, 1698."

William and Anne Foster had these children:—

- 2. i. ISAAC,² born about 1652.
- ii. JOHN,² born 15 July, 1656; died 19 Dec., 1659.
- iii. ANNE,² bapt. 5 Sept., 1658; married Eleazer Phillips, of Charlestown, died 1 Dec., 1695.
- iv. MARY,² bapt. 6 May, 1660; married 8 Aug., 1676, James Smith; he died 18 Sept., 1678, and she married 18 April, 1681, Timothy Phillips, and died 30 April, 1755.
- 3. v. RICHARD,² born 10 August, 1663.
- vi. ELIZABETH,² born 5 April, 1665; married 5 July, 1692, Isaac Goose, or Vergoose, of Boston, as his second wife.
- 4. vii. JOHN,² born 10 August, 1666.
- viii. DEBORAH,² born 28 Feb., 1668; died 22 April, 1668.
- 2. ISAAC,² Rev. (*William¹*), graduated at Harvard College in 1671; was probably the son taken prisoner with his father; was admitted to the Church of Charlestown, 28 October, 1677; made Freeman of the Colony 2 October, 1678; and Fellow of Harvard College 22 May, of the same year; as a candidate for settlement was sought by several churches, and in 1680 became minister of the Church at Hartford, Connecticut; married the same year, Mehitable, daughter of Samuel Wyllis, of Hartford, widow of Daniel Russell, of Charlestown; he died 20 Aug. 1682, and Rev. Simon Bradstreet, of New London, thus notices the event in his journal. "Mr. Isaac Forster pastor of y^e old chh at Hartford dyed. He was aged about 30, a man of good Abilities. His death has made such a breach y^t will not easily bee made up." His widow married, thirdly, Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, his successor in the church of Hartford. Isaac and Mehitable Foster had one child, a daughter:—
- ANN,³ born ; m. 29 Nov., 1699, Rev. Thomas Buckingham, of Hartford.
- 3. RICHARD² (*William¹*), was born at Charlestown, 10 August, 1663; married 4 May, 1686, Parnel, daughter and only child of Isaac and Mary (Nowell) Winslow, of Charlestown; in 1706 was called captain; died in 1745, and his widow in 1751. They had children:—
- i. PARNELL,³ born 23 Feb., 1687; died 14 Nov., 1687.
- ii. RICHARD,³ born 28 Nov., 1689; died 11 Feb., 1694.
- iii. MARY,³ born 16 Feb., 1692; married 9 Dec., 1712, Samuel Cary, died 23 Dec., 1718.
- 5. iv. RICHARD,³ born 23 March, 1694.
- v. PARNELL,³ born 25 Aug., 1696; married John Codman, died 15 Sept., 1752.
- vi. ANN,³ born 8 Nov., 1699; married 6 Nov., 1721, Rev. Daniel Perkins, of Bridgewater.
- vii. SARAH,³ born 16 Nov., 1701; married 19 July, 1723, Dr. Peter Calef, of Charlestown; he died 11 Oct., 1735, and she within a year.
- 6. viii. ISAAC,³ born 30 Jan., 1704.
- ix. ELIZABETH,³ born 21 Aug., 1706; married Timothy McDaniel, of Boston, afterwards of Charlestown.
- x. KATHARINE,³ born 6 April, 1713; died 11 Feb., 1716.
- 4. JOHN² (*William¹*), was born at Charlestown 10 Aug., 1666; was a mariner, and styled Captain; went to Barbadoes 1696; married 31 May, 1692, Sarah Richardson of Newbury; after her death he mar-

ried in Boston, 22 Sept., 1718, Esther Lothrop. He died 14 June, 1723, and his widow married, 12 Sept., 1726, Francis Norwood, of Gloucester. He had children:—

- i. ABIGAIL,³ born 20 April, 1693; married 1st, Jabez Salter, 2d, Edward Crufit.
- ii. SARAH,³ born 31 Aug., 1696; died 15 March, 1698.
- iii. MARY, born 15 Aug., 1698; m. 1st, Robert Nowell, 2d, Samuel White.
- iv. ELIZABETH,³ born ; married 13 Nov., 1735, John Smart, and lived in Boston, and secondly, 14 Feb., 1740, Sendall Williams.

5. RICHARD³ (*Richard², William¹*), was born at Charlestown 23 March, 1694; was quite a prominent citizen; held the office of High Sheriff for the county of Middlesex from 1731 till 1764, resigning which, he was in 1764 appointed Justice of the Court of Common Pleas for the same county, in which office he continued until 1771. His death took place 29 Aug., 1774. He was twice married; his first wife was Sarah, daughter of John and Sarah Emerson, who died 16 Nov., 1724, aged 29; he married secondly, 21 October, 1725, Mary, daughter of John and Sarah Foye, who died 26 Oct., 1774, aged 72 years. His children were:—

- i. SARAH,⁴ bapt. 4 May, 1718; married 22 March, 1738, Samuel Bradstreet.
- ii. RICHARD,⁴ born 8 Oct., 1720; died 22 Jan., 1722.
- iii. MARY,⁴ bapt. 4 Nov., 1722; married 18 June, 1741, John Breed, 2d John White.
- iv. KATHERINE,⁴ born 16 Aug., 1724; died, aged 5 months.
- v. ELIZABETH,⁴ born 17 Sept., 1726; married 9 Dec., 1748, David Cheever, died before 1760.
- vi. RICHARD,⁴ born 17 Feb., 1728; probably died young, as he is not named as an heir.
- vii. PARNELL,⁴ born 24 Aug., 1729; married 13 Oct., 1763, Riehard Boylston.
- viii. HANNAH,⁴ bapt. 28 Feb., 1731; married 22 Nov., 1753, Eben Kent, Jr.
- ix. WILLIAM,⁴ bapt. 17 Dee., 1732; probably died young, as he is not named as an heir.
- x. MARGARET,⁴ born 19 May, 1734; died 15 Dec., 1789, unmarried.
- xi. ANN,⁴ born 24 July, 1736; married 29 Oct., 1767, John Austin, Jr.
- xii. KATHERINE,⁴ bapt. 19 March, 1738; married John Sprague, of Lancaster.
- xiii. ABIGAIL,⁴ bapt. 27 Jan., 1739; married 22 Sept., 1768, Isaae Codman.
- xiv. JOHN,⁴ bapt. 5 April, 1741; probably died young, as he is not named as an heir.
- xv. MARTHA,⁴ bapt. 27 June, 1742.

6. ISAAC³ (*Richard², William¹*), was born at Charlestown, 30 Jan., 1704; was a sea captain, making frequent voyages between Boston and Europe; in 1765 was called merchant; he was quite a prominent citizen of Charlestown, and his name often occurs in Frothingham's History of the town; he married, 24 Aug., 1732, Eleanor, daughter of William and Eleanor (Jenner) Wyer; died 27 Dec., 1781; his widow died 5 March, 1798, aged 84. No probate of his estate is to be found. Their children were:—

7. i. WILLIAM,⁴ born 27 May, 1733.
- ii. ISAAC,⁴ bapt. 28 May, 1738; died young.
8. iii. ISAAC,⁴ born 28 Aug., 1740.
- iv. THOMAS,⁴ bapt. 27 Dec., 1741; probably died young, not being named in 1751 as an heir of his grandfather William Wyer.
- v. EDWARD,⁴ bapt. 6 May, 1744, probably died young, not being named in 1751 as an heir of his grandfather William Wyer.
- vi. ELEANOR,⁴ born 4 Aug., 1746; married 30 Oct., 1769, Dr. Nathaniel Coffin, of Portland, Me.; died 8 September, 1822.
- vii. RICHARD,⁴ bapt. 4 Dec. 1748; probably died young, not being named in 1751 as an heir of his grandfather William Wyer.

7. WILLIAM⁴ (*Isaac³, Richard², William¹*), was born at Charlestown, 27 May, 1733; graduated at Harvard University in 1752; was styled Doctor on various deeds, &c. He died 3 Dec., 1759. Administration on his estate was granted to his father Isaac, merchant, 29 Oct., 1765.
8. ISAAC⁴ (*Isaac³, Richard², William¹*), was born at Charlestown, 28 Aug., 1740; graduated at Harvard University in 1758. He then began the study of medicine under Dr. Lloyd, of Boston, and completed his studies in England. In his profession he achieved considerable reputation, had a large practice, and numbered among his pupils, Doctors Bartlett, Welch and Eustis. He was a staunch patriot, and a prominent man in the town meetings of the day, his name appearing upon several committees. He was elected a delegate to the convention in the county of Middlesex in Aug., 1774, and a member of the first Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in October of the same year. In 1775 he was appointed a surgeon, was for some months at the head of the Military Medical Department, while General Ward held command in Cambridge. After the battle of Concord he gave up a large private practice to attend to the wounded. He was appointed by the committee of safety, to attend the men wounded at the battle of Bunker's Hill. Soon after was appointed surgeon of the State Hospital. General Washington, on the discovery of the treachery of Dr. Church, appointed him in October, Director General *pro tem.* of the American Hospital Department. In 1777 the office of Deputy Director General of Hospitals was established, and he was chosen by Congress to this office, having charge of the eastern department. This office was abolished in 1780, and of course Dr. Foster was left out of the service. His health had suffered so much by fatigue and exposures, that he lived but a short time longer.

In the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1859, under the title of "A Bundle of old Letters," there is given a short sketch of his life and public services, together with over a dozen letters written by him, from various places, 1776-79, principally to his wife, in which reference is made to the state of affairs, and many incidents of the day are recorded.

He lived on the northwest corner of Main and Henley streets.

He married, 4 July, 1765, Martha, daughter of Thaddeus Mason, of Cambridge. She died 21 Sept., 1770, aged 27, and he married again 8 Sept., 1771, Mary, daughter of Richard Russell, of Charlestown. He died 27 Feb., 1782, probably in Boston. His will is dated 1 Aug., 1780, and proved 19 April, 1782. Suffolk Probate Records.

His widow married, 8 June, 1783, John Hurd, of Boston, as his second wife, and died 14 January, 1786, aged 37. His children were:—

- i. MARTHA,⁵ born 11 May, 1766; died 4 May, 1768.
- ii. ELEANOR,⁵ born 4 Nov., 1767.
- iii. MARTHA,⁵ born 19 Sept., 1769; not mentioned in her father's will.
- iv. NANCY,⁵ born
- v. MARY BEAL,⁵ bapt. 23 Aug., 1774; married William Pratt, of Boston, mariner.



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